

St. Canice's N.S. Policy on Attendance

This policy has been prepared by the principal in consultation with the staff in accordance with Section 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) in 2005. St. Canice's school will fulfil its obligations under Section 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and in accordance with the guidelines issued by the NEWB in 2005.

Aims:

St. Canice's Primary School is committed to providing a learning environment that will foster all children's learning and encourage them to attend school regularly. Our aim is to provide a stimulating day, with clear guidelines and structures, so that children feel welcome and nurtured while attending school. We believe that our pupils will benefit from this education through regular attendance. In so far as possible, we aim to have full attendance from all of our pupils.

Casual absences (for whatever reason) are discouraged as they have a direct impact on children's learning. We aim to support children and parents in achieving good attendance.

Among the many strategies/measures we use to ensure regular attendance are:

- We aim to provide a warm, welcoming and supportive learning environment for our pupils, one in which they are valued and respected and in which provision is made for their learning needs.
 - We hold regular and open class-level discussions with the children on the importance of regular attendance.
 - We positively affirm those children who have excellent attendance.
 - We praise those who are making a serious effort to improve their attendance.
 - We have regular communication with parents and provide them with updates on their child's attendance if it is a cause for concern.
 - Our class teachers and support teachers seek to ensure that children who may be experiencing learning difficulties are actively supported and encouraged with appropriate teaching. Homework can be tailored to the individual needs of these pupils.
 - Our school's code of behaviour takes a positive approach to fostering good behaviour.
 - We ask parents to value every minute that the children spend at school and therefore make sure that the children are sitting in their classroom by 8.50am. Children who arrive after 9.00am will be entered late on Aladdin (School's Management System).
 - In the same way we ask parents not to ask to let the children off early, unless for a specific appointment. We use a sign-out sheet for children who are collected early by a parent and parents are asked to contact the office. This enables us to keep a record of such absences and make parents aware of how much time is being missed. Early leaving will also be recorded on Aladdin (School's Management System).
- The calendar for the coming school year is distributed annually in June to all families. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 provides a framework under which attendance at school can be dealt with by law. As a result of the Act, the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) has been established and has appointed Education Welfare Officers.

Under the regulations of the Act, the school is obliged to:

- Keep a record of pupils' attendance, this is done in the class roll books and on Aladdin (School's Management System).
- Submit to the NEWB the names of all pupils who miss 20 or more days from school.
- Keep a record of pupils' absences.

Under the Act, parents are required to:

- Send their children to school each day.
- Notify the Principal, in writing, the reason for a child's absence.

The school keeps a record of all such absences, using the codes as set down by the NEWB (see below). To facilitate both parents and teachers in the maintenance of such records, the school office will notify the class teacher if an explanation for absence has been communicated to the school.

National Education Welfare Board Codes for Category of Absence

A Illness

B Urgent Family Reasons (eg: Bereavement)

C Expelled

D Suspended

E Other (eg: Holidays, Religious Observance, Emigration)

F Unexplained

G Transfer to another school (written confirmation received from other school)

Reporting Absences to the Educational Welfare Services in TUSLA

Since the inception of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, we report our school attendance figures to TUSLA at the end of each term and at the end of the school year.

The school submits data when:

A student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively

A student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively

A student's name is to be removed from the school register for any reason

The principal teacher is concerned about a student's attendance

The Board of Management decides to expel a student

In a case where the school has to make a prompt referral for service as needs arise, in relation to emerging and ongoing attendance difficulties of particular concern, the school will adhere to TUSLA's Managed Case referral process as per the referral form in the link below: <http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-schools-inc-absencereporting/download-reporting-documentation/>

At the end of the year, the school submits its Annual Attendance Report to TUSLA which gives overall absence information for the entire school population.

A letter will be sent home at the beginning of each term reminding parents / guardians of their obligation to explain any absence from school and of the school's obligation to report to the NEWB those children who are absent for 20 or more days in total during the school year.

In our school parents / guardians may explain a child's absence from school in any of the following ways:

- A note can be given to the teacher – the class teacher will keep this on file.

- A note can be written in the homework journal – this will be photocopied and kept on file by the class teacher.
- Parent can contact the school by phone or in person – this will be recorded and kept on file by the class teacher.

This explanation may be given on the first day of absence, at any time during the absence or when the child returns to school. The explanation should give detailed information as to why the child could not attend school.

Teachers keep a daily record of those absent and the explanation provided for the child's absence. If an explanation is not given the school must record this absence as an unexplained absence. The class teacher will keep the explanation note on file and send the notes to the office at the end of each school year. The notes will be kept on file in the office.

A monthly review of attendance records is conducted by the principal, who will contact parents/guardians where there is a concern with the child's attendance. In addition teachers will inform parents / guardians at the annual parent/teacher meeting of any concerns the school has regarding a child's attendance.

The school will notify the parents / guardians by post if their child's name has been forwarded to the NEWB Tusla Child & Family Agency.

Copies of the policy are available from the school office.

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management at its meeting of 29/06/2018

Date of policy review:

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: